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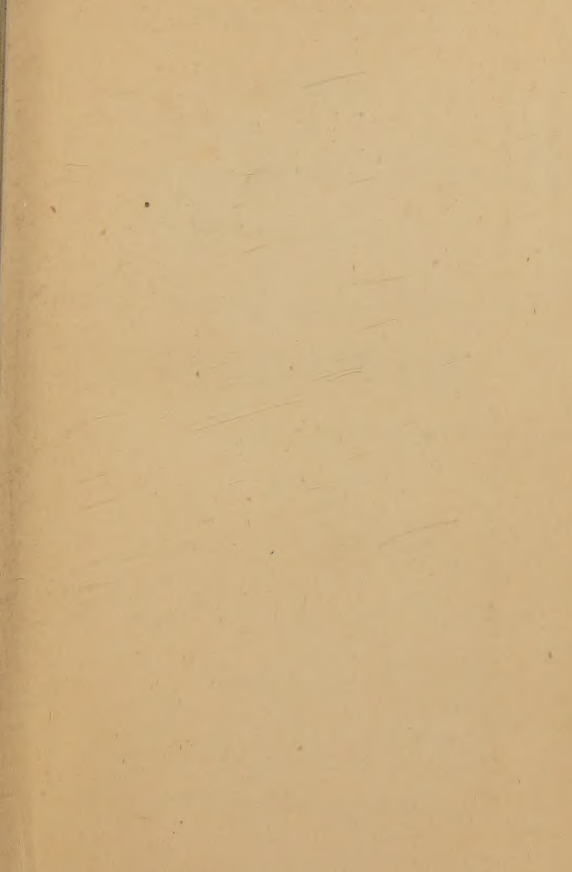
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In Remembrance of

Confirmation Day

By

your Pastor
Charles Zeigelboer
Evans City
July 26, 1908



BE TRUE!

A FEW WORDS
TO THE CONFIRMED YOUTH

OF THE

EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

BY

REV. G. T. COOPERRIDER, A. M.



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BE TRUE!



DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS:—Your Confirmation Day now belongs to the mighty Past, but it has lost none of its importance on that account. It remains one of the greatest events in your life's history, let that be what it may. On Confirmation Day you pub-

licly confessed your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and took upon yourselves the solemn vow that, by God's help, you would be faithful unto Him and His Church until death. That was a step of vast importance, and the day upon which it was taken should never be forgotten. With great interest you looked forward to that occasion; when you knelt before the sacred altar other hearts than yours

were also filled with a sense of deep concern. Loving parents, whose eyes were dim with tears of joy and gratitude, anxiously witnessed the impressive scene, and their silent prayers, like guardian angels, hovered around your earnest vow as it ascended to the throne of the living God. Christian friends entreated the Savior in your behalf, and the kind pastor, who patiently instructed you in the way of Jesus, thanked God for your confession, and heartily invoked our Heavenly Father's blessing upon you as the young servants of the Lord. And the whole Church still follows you with the earnest prayer that you may remain faithful and true.

Yes, by the grace of God *be true!* This little volume is given you in remembrance of Confirmation Day, and is intended to remind you of the precious truths you have learned, and to call attention to your duties and privileges in

the service of our Lord. You have now been received into full communion in the Church, and she expects you to be true in every respect. By means of these pages, we would encourage you on your way, and tender you such assistance as the Lord may enable us to give. As the greater portion of our young readers are yet under the care of their parents, we would begin by saying:

I. BE TRUE TO YOUR PARENTS.

Our Heavenly Father is a God of order. In the work of Creation one of His earliest acts was the establishment of order in everything. Every creature of God has been assigned a particular place, and each has its special duty to perform. That God may be glorified by the work of His hands, He continues to rule and govern all things according to His good pleasure. Every creature must obey its Creator, and one of the first lessons God

gave to man was that of obedience. Gen. 2, 16. 17. Obedience is still demanded of us in every rank and station in life. We obey God by trying to walk in the order which He has arranged for our good. The Lord rules us, but He also employs the service of men in executing His will among us. God's will is made known to us by means of His written Word; it assigns our duties according to the position we occupy in life. As the Word is for the direction of all, it does not fail to define the duties required of children, and the young in general. This is done by many passages of Scripture and is expressly stated in the following words: "Honor thy father and mother; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." Eph. 6, 2. 3.

This, as you have long since learned, is the fourth commandment, and do not forget that it is a sacred message sent unto you by the living God. It is the

finger of the Lord pointing you to the way of obedience, and, at the same time, encouraging you with the promise that, if truly obedient, it shall be well with you. "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," saith the Lord. How often you have repeated these words while attending the lectures given by the pastor! Let them sink deeply into your hearts, and seek to practice the precious lessons they impart. By those familiar words you are taught to be true to your parents.

The family is an institution of God, and all His laws concerning it are meant to be obeyed. Every family is a kind of little kingdom over which the parents are the divinely appointed rulers. The parents are not only to supply the family with food and clothing, and provide the children with shelter until they are able to take care of themselves, but they are to rule and govern the household. This fact clearly implies obedience upon the

part of the children, for the parents are not the rulers of the house unless the children are under their control. And that children are to be subject unto their parents is plainly taught by the example of Jesus, Luke 2, 51; St. Paul also writes: "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." Col. 3, 20.

The Scriptures strictly charge parents to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6, 4. God has made it the duty of your parents carefully to watch over you, and use every effort to keep you in the right way. You are not as able as they are to decide what is for your good, and years of experience enable them to see dangers where you think there are none. Many times when your parents correct you it is done to save you from errors and follies disclosed to them by sad and bitter experiences in their own youth.

Through love, they seek to spare you from the pangs and sorrows that are sure to come upon you if left to choose the course you think best. If you live to be several years older, you will see many things in quite a different light from what you do now. Then you will be very thankful that you were not permitted to have your own way in the days of childhood and youth.

We know that the young are usually full of vigor and life, and that even mild restraint is often distasteful to them. But proper discipline dare not be withheld on that account. If a young tree is allowed to follow its own inclinations it is almost certain to grow up faulty in shape. It must be carefully watched and trained, so as to correct all improper tendencies before the tree is too strongly set in its growth. Young people must be treated much like young trees; they need close attention while their habits

and character are being formed. The Lord says: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. 22, 6.

Just as we see neglected trees grow up crooked and ill-shaped, we also see young people become settled in evil ways when not advised by older heads than theirs, and in love prevented from following the paths that they prefer. Do you not know many young persons of sorry habits and manners, and whose reputation is such as you would dread? Certainly you do. But why are those persons what they are? We can almost hear you reply, "Why, they never had the right training." This is most likely the case. But, did you ever stop to think what you would probably be, had your parents been less strict with you? Human nature is pretty much alike the world over; it is always inclined to run in wrong channels, and if it chances to miss one

evil course, it is certain to fall into another that is not much better.

Young people are often heard grumbling and complaining when their wishes are opposed by their parents. They say: "Yes, other people's children can do as they please, but we can't; we have no privileges at all." They feel real vexed about it, and sometimes are very much ashamed that they are not allowed to run hither and thither, as others are permitted to do. It is generally an easy matter to recognize the members of those families in which the children "do as they please," and the marks by which they are known are mostly not very creditable, neither to the children nor to the parents. Have it said that you are "tied to your mother's apron strings," rather than be seen everywhere and with everybody, and run the great risk of falling into the "smart" ways so common among the untrained and badly trained

youth. Ah, my young friends, you will see the day when you will be thankful for that very restraint of which you now complain. After years of observation and experience, you will view with alarm the dangers lurking along the paths that are so enticing to the average youth, and with sincere gratitude you will remember the strict discipline by which loving and faithful parents shielded you from destruction during the days of your early life.

Never mutter and complain when your parents deem it necessary to correct you. Do not pout, and give place to a rebellious spirit, even if your parents do oppose some pet notion, or spoil a few of your youthful plans. It is better to endure slight disappointments now rather than open the way to a train of evils that may dog your steps the remainder of your days. God has made it your parents' duty to bring you up in the way

you should go, and the same Lord has made it your duty to obey. Therefore be true to your parents, and honor them as God's servants by whom you are to be ruled to His praise and to your own temporal and eternal good.

EVERY FORM OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY
MUST BE RESPECTED.

When we speak of obedience to parents we not only have reference to your own natural parents, but to all others who may be placed over you in their stead. We would especially mention step-parents and foster-parents. Has death deprived you of father or mother, and you now have a step-parent, then do not forget that that person is divinely appointed to perform the part of a real parent toward you. And in this case it is also your duty to render the same obedience that you would to your real parent. Or, if, from any proper reason,

you have been given into the care of foster-parents, persons who have taken you to raise as their own child, you owe them like obedience. We mention these instances because they are very common, and are often associated with serious trouble. In cases of this kind, great wrongs are often done on both sides. But, sad to say, there are so many young people who fail to be true to those under whose care and protection a mysterious Providence has placed them. Indeed, how general is the complaint that children refuse to honor and obey step-parents as they should. And, what is still worse, they are often encouraged in their disobedience by persons who are much older! This is a very sad state of affairs, and these things ought not to be so, especially among Christians.

The Lord, speaking through the mouth of His apostle, says: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," Rom.

13, 1. This applies to every possible case, and requires us to submit to every form of authority under which we may be placed, unless in opposition to God's Word. Disobedience to those who, in any manner, rank as our parents and masters is always sinful. This you have also learned in the catechetical class, and we beg you not to forget it. In the fear and love of God, strive to be true to all superiors, let their station be what it may. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" Eph. 6, 1.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT IS ALWAYS
IN FORCE.

Young people anxiously look forward to the time when they will "be of age." This is quite natural, as that is the time when, according to the laws of the land, they are at liberty to begin life for themselves. Of course, under ordinary circumstances, when they are no longer to

depend upon their parents for all of their bodily needs, when the children are grown, it is proper that they should provide for themselves, and make an earnest effort to perform their individual part in the great drama of life. The figures 18 and 21 are golden numbers in the eye of the young, and the years seem long and tedious. With marked interest and anxiety the ages named are awaited, and great plans are laid for the future. This is right enough, for every one has been created for a purpose, and all young people should aim to be something in the world. God does not give us life and strength simply that we may *exist* here below; we are here to be active and useful. But zeal and activity are not pleasing to God unless manifested in the right direction. Therefore we would point out a few dangerous faults, and warn our young friends against them.

It too often occurs that young people

regard being "of age" as the arrival of a period in their history when they are no longer required to pay any special attention to the wishes, suggestions, or needs, of their parents. They think that they have "served their full time," and are now free and can do as they please. This idea begins to manifest itself in very many at quite an early age. As children advance into youthfulness they claim ever increasing privileges, and often to such an extent as to sadden and alarm their parents. This terrible fault is shamefully common in our day. We live in a fast age, and one striking characteristic of the times is the great sin of disobedience to parents.

In too many homes the children gradually lay aside the honor and respect that is due to their parents. Father and mother are spoken of as the "old man," and the "old woman," and their most earnest desires are not deemed worthy of

a moment's consideration. Such children usually perform their daily tasks with apparent dissatisfaction, and think that they know best what to do, and how and when to do it; and when evening comes they are most likely gone, their parents neither knowing where they are, nor when they will return. Many young people treat their home as a kind of harbor open to them at all hours, or as a sort of free boarding house at which they may stay until they are "of age," or until they choose to go elsewhere. This is a sad picture, but it only presents matters as they really stand in many, many families of the land. Thousands of fathers and mothers are literally crushed by the burden of grief and shame heaped upon them by their unfaithful sons and daughters. Lord, lend Thy pitying ear to the sighs and groans of these despised and neglected parents, and bind up their broken hearts! Have

mercy upon our thoughtless and disobedient youth, and turn them to the paths of righteousness!

My young readers, is it not sad that there are so many children who think, and act, in the manner above described? Would you desire to lead such a thoughtless and wayward life? Would you thus blast your own welfare, and bring your parents to the grave by loading them down with sorrow? Is it possible that some of my young friends have chosen such a course? God forbid! We sincerely hope that none who read these lines are guilty of such base ingratitude as we have mentioned.

Better things are expected of you. With great care and anxiety your parents have watched over you from your earliest infancy. Think of the sleepless nights, and the unceasing toil that they have endured on your account! No sacrifices were too great for them to make

in your behalf. Neither were your spiritual wants neglected. With joy your parents brought you to the Lord in holy baptism, and labored to rear you in the fear and love of God. At a proper age you were sent to the pastor to be prepared for confirmation. You were duly instructed and confirmed, and are now numbered with those entitled to all the blessings and privileges of the Church. For all this, next to God, you owe your thanks to your parents or to those who acted in your parents' stead. Would you avoid untold misery, then adorn your Christian profession by leading a humble Christian life. Be true. Put to practice the principles you were taught previous to your confirmation. Prove by your conduct that you mean to be true; show your faithfulness and sincerity of purpose by trying to do God's will in all of your home relations. Remember that the fourth commandment is always in

force; God has not limited it to persons of a certain age and it applies to you as long as you live. Honor, respect, and obey your parents as much as possible. Even if you discern great weaknesses in them they are still your parents, and are not to be despised. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Prov. 30, 17.

BE USEFUL WHILE AT THE OLD HOME.

As you are already confirmed, you have now reached an age that enables you to be of great service to your parents, and to other members of the family. Seek to be useful in the home circle; aim to be a real help, and not a burden. Perform your tasks promptly and cheerfully, and not with scowls and frowns. The mood in which a service is rendered is often more important than the service

itself. Quite frequently, a very small favor, done with alacrity and pleasure, has more to commend it than a great duty performed in a spirit of ill-will and dislike. Cultivate a cheerful disposition, and contend against every inclination to sourness and bad temper. Encourage the sweet rose, but banish the thistles and thorns.

Always be ready to favor your parents as much as possible; do what you can to relieve them in the toil and burdens of life. Never be ashamed to engage in any honorable and useful employment. Being a gentleman, or lady, does not consist in hanging around in idleness. It is no disgrace for a young man to be seen assisting his father in the labors of any respectable calling. No sensible person will think any the less of those daughters who help their mothers to perform the duties of the house. To know how to cook, bake, sew, wash, and, in

short, to be master of every department of domestic labor, is an honor to any young lady. When a silly pride prevents girls from learning household duties it bodes no good for the future. When an idle and foolish young woman becomes a wife, the prospects for a neat and happy home are not very flattering. It is likely to result in serious difficulties for the time being, and may even have an unfavorable effect upon the rising generation.

Have you also brothers and sisters? If so, do all you can to add to their happiness and welfare. Help them as much as you are able according to their respective ages and necessities. If, in the family, there are children younger than yourself, remember that they will be influenced by your example. They will learn many things from you; your language, habits, and manners, will largely be impressed on your brothers and sisters.

Endeavor to so order your ways that your every influence will be wielded unto good. Avoid dissension and strife, and seek to make the years spent in your parental home a season of profit and pleasure to all. The blessed influence of a happy home cannot be fully estimated. A truly Christian home is a type of Heaven, and will always furnish the material for many joyful recollections in after years.

My young friends, appreciate your home while you are permitted to enjoy it; be useful to your parents, brothers, and sisters; strive to add sunshine and happiness to the home of your youth; then it will be to you one of the dearest places on earth, and its memories be cherished as treasures of gold.

ENTERING ACTIVE LIFE.

To all earthly things there must be an end. Let the "old home" be what it will, children can not always remain

there. The time finally comes when the duties of active life require the sons and daughters to go forth and battle for themselves. With many this is necessary even while they are yet quite young. If this is the case with you, dear reader, be true to your parents if they are yet alive, and true to their memory if they are dead. If your parents are still spared, then listen to their advice, and permit them to direct you in the discharge of your duty. Do not think that because you are away from home you are free from all obligations to your parents. You continue to owe them the same obedience as before, and are now in special need of their counsel and prayers. It is your duty to let your parents know where you are, and how and what you are doing. Prove that you are one that can be trusted. Be true to your parents, whether at home or abroad.

But, perhaps, death has robbed you of

your parents and thus made it necessary for you to leave the home you loved so well. In that sad event comfort yourself with these consoling words: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Ps. 27, 10. The Lord will neither forsake nor forget His people. Put your trust in Him and He will surely care for you, and help you in all your trials:

"If thou but suffer God to guide thee,

And hope in Him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength whate'er betide thee
And bear thee through the evil days;
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
Builds on the rock that none can move."

No longer having your parents, be true to their memory and thereby be an honor to the family name. Be of good cheer; the Lord always helps those who, in the right way, try to help themselves. The Lord has a work for you to perform, and He will supply your wants and lead

you into a field of usefulness. Be not cast down and discouraged, but

“Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving,
So do thine own part faithfully,
And trust His Word, though undeserving,
Thou yet shall find it true for thee :
God never yet forsook in need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.”

But, by the mercy of God, the blessings and privileges of the “old home” are enjoyed by many children until they are fully grown. Many parents are spared long enough to see their children settled down in the duties of real life. Entering upon the duties of active life is a step of vast importance. Young Christians should, first of all, earnestly ask God to guide them in the selection of a calling. They should also consult their parents in this matter. A young man does not always know in what he is best fitted to engage, and a mistake made in the selection of a calling may

render life almost a failure. Parents, and other Christians of sound judgment and wide experience, are able to give the young much valuable advice. Heed the counsel of older persons, and profit by their wisdom. Pay special attention to the advice of your parents; they have your welfare deeply at heart. They also understand you better, and have studied your interests more closely than others could ordinarily be expected to do. Honor and obey them by following their instructions as far as possible. Of course a wise parent will not be arbitrary in his decisions, but will be guided by the general fitness of things and the inclinations of the child, provided these inclinations are of a proper and honorable character.

When selecting your occupation, young men, earnestly consider this: If God has given you the required gifts, is it not perhaps your duty to study for the min-

istry? Lay the matter before your conscience, and if there is evidence that God wants you to preach the Gospel, humbly submit to the will of the Lord. Let no worldly motives prevent you from serving your Master as a messenger of Christ. Give this matter prayerful consideration, and ask the advice of your pastor, parents, and Christian friends.

As children are to consult their parents in selecting an occupation, they are also to consult them when it comes to choosing a life partner. Very often, especially in these days, parents are entirely ignored in this important affair; they are treated as if they have no voice whatever in deciding as to whom they shall receive as a member of the family. Quite frequently parents are very much surprised, if not almost shocked, to hear that a son or daughter is married. The marriage takes place without the knowledge and consent of the parents and they

are expected to submit, and be satisfied, whether the choice has been good or bad. Such high-handed proceedings upon the part of the children are shameful. God has given the parents a voice in these things and their rights and wishes should be respected. Secret engagements, those in which the parents are ignored, are always sinful, and are likely to result in great evils. Much of the misery in unhappy marriages is the fruit of disobedience to parents. When young people will neither ask nor accept their parents' advice, but secretly and wilfully take the reins into their own hands, they are running a fearful risk, and are in great danger of blasting their happiness forever. Be true to your parents in everything, and the Lord's blessing will be with you. "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth." By obeying and honoring their

parents the young will save themselves from much sorrow and shame, and escape many evils that would shorten their days and ruin their souls. True Christian obedience brings a peaceful conscience, pleasant memories, and a rich reward; but waywardness, disobedience, and folly, have as their fruits degradation and death. "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." Prov. 23, 22.

But while trying to be true to your parents, do not forget that you also have a spiritual Mother whom you should serve with strict devotion. By your spiritual Mother we mean the *Church*. Hence we say:

II. BE TRUE TO YOUR CHURCH.

Immediately after the Fall God promised to redeem man from the powers of darkness and death. Gen. 3, 15. From

that time on God taught His people to expect a Savior. All those who believed the Lord and trusted in His promises were owned as His children. Those who thus trusted in the Lord and His promises constituted His Church. By the power of His Word, as revealed unto the patriarchs and prophets, God mercifully led His people for thousands of years. During that time the Church was comforted by renewed and plainer promises that the Redeemer would surely come. Salvation through Christ alone has always been God's plan, and this plan was also effectual in all who believed in the promised Savior prior to His coming. The Lord's pledge was faithfully kept, and the long-expected Savior finally appeared. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Gal. 4, 4. 5. The divine promises and prophecies respecting the Savior were all fulfilled in the blessed Jesus of Nazareth. Christ the God-man actually came and gave Himself upon the cross as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus was indeed the Christ for whom the Old Testament Church had so patiently waited and in whom they found peace for their souls.

The Christ having now come and been offered as a sacrifice for sin, a new order of things was established. The various sacrifices prescribed by the ceremonial law were types of the crucified Savior; therefore when Christ came these types, or shadows, were no longer needed, for their place was now taken by that Body whose coming they indicated.

From the day of the Fall, God has always pointed to Christ as the Redeemer of the world and the great Head of the Church. The promised Savior is the

central figure around which the books of the Old Testament are clustered ; they point to the time and place of His nativity, and foretell His character, office and works. And when, according to God's promise, the Christ was born at Bethlehem, a host of angels was sent to announce that this new-born Child was really the expected Redeemer. At the baptism of Christ the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and the Father's voice was heard to exclaim : "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3, 16, 17. Also, at the time of the Transfiguration, witnessed by Peter, James and John, a voice from the cloud said : "This is my beloved Son : hear Him." Mark 9, 7 ; Luke 9, 35. Jesus likewise acknowledged Himself as the true Christ of God. Just before His ascension He said unto His apostles : "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, there-

fore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28, 18. 19. Christ is truly King, and the Christian Church is His kingdom.

By nature we are the "children of wrath," lost and condemned creatures. If this were not our dreadful condition Christ would never have come to save us. The story of the Savior's awful sufferings and death is also the declaration of our wretched, sinful and lost estate. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isa. 53, 5.

However, the mere preparation of a healing remedy will never benefit the sick and afflicted; the remedy may be just the thing in every way, but it can never effect a cure without being applied. Likewise the perfect redemption accom-

plished for us by Christ will profit us nothing except it be brought to us, and through faith, be made our own. Therefore God has ordained His Word and Sacraments as the means through which salvation is offered, conveyed, and sealed to us. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," says Christ; and to this command He adds the promise, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." St. Paul also says, the Gospel of Christ is the "Power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1, 16. "Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls." Jas. 1. 21.

Concerning baptism the Savior declares, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." John 3, 5. St. Paul writes: "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regenera-

tion and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3, 5. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3, 26, 27. These passages plainly show that Baptism "works the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promises of God declare." And in order that we may be kept in the true faith, the Lord instituted the Holy Supper in which He gives us His precious body and blood, thereby sealing unto us the forgiveness of sins, and nourishing our souls unto everlasting life. This blessed Sacrament He instituted in the night of His betrayal, thus showing His great love for us, and His anxiety for our welfare when standing in the very shadow of the cross. Tendering us this testimony of His undying love, He says: "This do

in remembrance of Me." Neither was He silent as to the benefits conveyed by this testament in His blood, but points them out in these words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." Therefore in the Sacrament of the Altar forgiveness of sin, life and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.

Through the Word and Sacraments the Lord continues to deliver souls from the bonds of sin and death, and gather them into the kingdom. Those thus brought to Christ compose His Church. Every true believer in Christ is really a member of Christ's Church, is a child of God, and an heir of heaven. This rich inheritance, dear reader, is in store for you, if you have given your heart to Jesus and remain His true disciple to the end. By the Sacrament of Baptism the Lord has owned you as His, and

sealed unto you His covenant of grace. That covenant God will neither break nor suffer to be annulled; it will stand forever. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 54, 10. In the hours of temptation and severe trials comfort yourself by remembering the covenant God has made with you in Baptism. Depend upon Him, and be assured that He will in no wise cast you out. Be strong in the Lord and, by His help, do not permit Satan to cheat you out of your rich inheritance. If you desire to be saved, remain with God's people—be true to the Church. Apart from the Church you can have no hope of being saved, for:

OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
THERE ARE NO MEANS OF
SALVATION.

God ministers to your wants through His appointed means. This is true as regards the necessities of both body and soul. God has the power to sustain our lives without employing any visible means for our support. But it has pleased Him to appoint our daily food as the means through which we are to receive nourishment for our bodies. The Lord has not promised us the preservation of life and strength independently of all food and drink, and he who, in his folly, would insist upon living without these things would soon perish from starvation. Our daily food supports our bodies simply because God has so arranged it, and this arrangement must stand, regardless of any suggestions or arguments on our part.

Just as God supports our bodies through the means which He has chosen for that purpose, in like manner also He sustains our souls through the means ordained for their support. And just as the rejection of all bodily food ends in the death of the body, the despising of all spiritual food must also result in the death of the soul. The Bible plainly teaches that the Word and Sacraments are the channels through which God ordinarily ministers to the wants of our souls. Where these means of salvation do not exist, or are not employed, there is nothing but spiritual starvation and death. This is evident from the Christless condition of the millions of heathen; they are without the means of salvation, and the Savior commands us to carry the Gospel to these benighted souls that they may believe and be saved. People only become Christians when the Word is preached and the Sacraments are admin-

istered, and those who have once been Christians cease to be such when they abandon the use of these means of grace.

Nothing can be more certain than the fact that the Word and Sacraments are the only revealed means through which God creates and fosters spiritual life within us, and that without these means of salvation there is no evidence upon which to found the hope of eternal life. But where do we find the Word and Sacraments? Only in the Church. The means of grace have been entrusted alone to the Church, and are only to be found where she has carried them. The Word and Sacraments are the peculiar marks of the Church on earth; where these marks exist, the Church exists also; and where they are absent, the Church is also absent. The Word and Sacraments are inseparably connected with the Church; God's kingdom on earth and the means of grace cannot be divorced.

In their blindness and folly, men often say: "We can be saved without the Church," and that "the Church is not necessary." But how is it possible to be saved independently of the Church when the Church alone has the *means* of salvation? Moreover, if the Church is not necessary, why did the Lord establish it at such a fearful cost? "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5, 25-27. The claim that "one can be just as good a Christian outside of the Church as in it," is one of the devil's lies by which he seeks to deceive and destroy souls. Let nothing prevent you from remaining a faithful child of the Church, for outside of the Church

there is no hope of salvation. God recognizes only two classes of people here below: viz., the Church and the world; the one is for Christ, and the other is against Him. Every one belongs either to the one class or the other, and will either live with Christ, or perish with the world. Then, if you desire to be saved, cling to the Church of Christ; be assured also that the Lord will be with you, for unto His Church on earth the Savior says: "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28, 20. But, dear readers, we have said, Be true to *your* Church; do not forget that we are addressing you as *Lutheran* Christians. Therefore we are entreating you to

BE TRUE TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH.

Remember that you are not only professing Christians, but are also known as

Lutherans. The term Lutheran implies a great deal more than many suppose; it is a name of which you should never feel ashamed, for it has a precious meaning and a glorious history.

When Christ was visibly present on earth He earnestly warned His Church to beware of false prophets. Matth. 7, 15. He knew what was in man, and clearly foresaw the dangers by which Israel would soon be troubled. Hence He warned the Church to be on her guard. After Christ, the Apostles found it necessary vigorously to oppose many evils, in doctrine and life, that were injuring the Church here and there. Under the care of the Apostles the Church grew rapidly, but her dangers also increased.

After the death of the Apostles, the perilous times prophesied by them were not long in making their appearance. During the centuries that immediately

followed, the Lord's household on earth had a sad and bitter experience. Many false teachers arose, and one grievous error after another crept in until false doctrines, superstitions, and spiritual and moral corruption hung over the Church like the pall of death. But while darkness covered the earth, "and gross darkness the people," the total destruction of the Church was not possible, for the Savior had promised that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16, 18. The Church had now reached the saddest period in her history, but the time for her deliverance was also at hand. God raised up His servant, Dr. Martin Luther, and made him the hero of a glorious Reformation. The Word of God, so long hidden beneath the black veil of Romish darkness and corruption, was again restored in all its strength and purity. The pure Gospel was received with joy by thousands of earnest souls

then groaning under the yoke of popery. God's truth was a mighty power in the hearts and hands of the people. Error was exposed and rejected, but those who dared to confess the truth were scorned and persecuted by the pope and his followers. Banished from the household against whose errors they had protested, there was no other course open to them but to care for their own interests. Those who accepted the Bible as their only guide and rule of faith were first known as "Evangelicals," but Pope Hadrian and his followers, desiring to cast reproach upon the humble confessors of the truth, called them *Lutherans*. It was in this way that the Church of the Reformation finally passed into history under the name Evangelical Lutheran Church.

From the time of the Reformation down to the present hour, the Lutheran Church has always been the exponent

and faithful guardian of the pure Word and Sacraments. Her doctrines have been assailed from every possible quarter; for nearly four centuries our beloved Lutheran Church has been the chief target for every enemy of the truth; but, built upon the prophets and apostles, and Christ her corner-stone, all the powers of earth and hell can never shake her from her firm foundation. Now, as in the past, being a Lutheran really means that one is a confessor of the truth as it is taught by the Scriptures. In view of her brilliant history and priceless treasures, it is an honor to be a faithful member of the grand, old Lutheran Church. Luther did not found a new Church, and invent new doctrines; he only gave the old Church a thorough cleansing, and, by God's help, again brought to light the precious doctrines taught by Christ and the Apostles.

After the truth was again restored in

all its purity, there were those who followed their own reason rather than the Word. Chief among such was Ulrich Zwingli; controlled by his reason, he rejected among others the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Christ's words: "This is My Body," Zwingli distorted into "This '*signifies,*' or '*represents,*' my body." Zwingli also had his friends, and thus a Reformed sect originated. Luther strictly adhered to the words of Christ, and insisted that weak human reason must always bow to the Word of God. All true Lutherans insist upon the same principle to-day. The doctrines of the Lutheran Church have never changed; they are unchangeable, for the eternal Word upon which they rest is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. On the contrary, Zwinglianism has developed a perfect swarm of sects. A departure from God's Word could not be expected to result other-

wise. Restless and unyielding spirits never grow weary in creating divisions; therefore hundreds of denominations have been formed, and this work will surely continue as long as sin is in the world.

Be true to the Lutheran Church! Do not be deceived by the sectarian plea: "there is no difference," "it's all the same," "you can do good in all the churches," etc., etc. If there is really no difference, why all this swarm of sects? And why do sectarians always want Lutherans to leave their Church and come and join theirs? Why do not all Protestants become Lutherans? As the Lutheran Church was first in the field, why were these sects established, if there is no difference? The answer is, simply because "they were not of us." 1 John, 2, 19. Full submission to God's Word is not agreeable to the spirit of sectarianism, and just because our Luth-

eran Church is faithful to the doctrines of the Scriptures she is despised and rejected. There is a wide difference between the Lutheran Church and every other denomination in existence. The sects themselves, in many instances, greatly differ from each other. How can sectarians have the boldness to tell us Lutherans there is no difference between us and them, when they despise our Church, oppose her in her work, and are scarcely willing to admit that Lutherans should be recognized as Christians! If sectarians actually think that the "churches are all good," why all this scrambling over each other in trying to gain members, and why are they so anxious to proselyte the children of our Church? In regard to some very important doctrines the Lutheran position is occupied by no other Church. Doctrinal differences are the most serious of all distinctions. It is only divine truth

that has power to save the soul; if you love your own soul, hold fast to the truth. Be true to *your* Church under all circumstances.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH HAS WHAT
YOUR SOUL NEEDS.

As we are saved alone by grace through faith, it is not only necessary for us to have the means of grace, but also the right doctrine concerning them. The welfare of your soul requires that you have the right conception of the Word and Sacraments, and know how to use them. The Lutheran Church is the only one that will rightly meet the wants of your soul. She alone has the right doctrine of the Word and Sacraments. A few comparisons will make this very plain.

Concerning the Lord's Supper, the Romish Church greatly errs in doctrine and practice. She teaches that when

the priest consecrates the bread and wine they are instantly *changed* into the real body and blood of Christ. Hence the idolatrous practice of bearing the consecrated host, or wafer, in their processions, and their bowing to it as they would to the living Savior Himself. The Romish Church also refuses to give the cup to the congregation; she thereby sets herself up as wiser than Christ who used both kinds in the Sacrament, and said: "Drink ye all of it." She mutilates the Sacrament and teaches superstitious ideas respecting it.

All Protestant sects fall into another extreme; they rob the Holy Supper of its true character and meaning, and assert that it is only bread and wine. To them the bread and wine are nothing but signs which are to serve as reminders of Christ's absent body. By Protestant sects this Sacrament is observed chiefly as a matter of obedience. They

empty the Holy Supper of its real treasures, and make of it a hollow affair in which there is scarcely anything but the husks.

The Lutheran Church adheres strictly to the Scriptures, and in true faith accepts the words of Christ: "This is my body which is given for you:" and, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22, 19. 20. When asked, "What is the Lord's Supper?" all Lutherans reply: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and drink, instituted by Christ Himself." The Lutheran Church believes that the earthly elements remain bread and wine, but that, by God's own appointment, they are made the bearers of His grace, and the means through which Christ imparts unto us His body and blood. That the bread and wine are not *changed*

into the body and blood of the Lord, but nevertheless employed as the bearers of His body and blood, is evident from the words of St. Paul: "The cup of *blessing* which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The *bread* which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" I Cor. 10, 16. Not only bread and wine, but also the body and blood of the Lord, are present in the Sacrament. That the bread and wine are not mere signs, or emblems, is plain from the words of Christ as cited by the three Evangelists, and St. Paul. These writers all agree that Christ said of the bread: "This is my body which is given for you." Was it only a sign or emblem that was crucified for us? No! It was the real Christ who hung upon the cross and shed His precious blood for us. Therefore in the Sacrament we receive the true body and blood of Christ, for the Savior Himself

teaches this when He says: "This is my body which is given for you," and, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." 1 Cor. 11, 23-29. The Lutheran Church makes no effort to explain how these things can be; no such explanation is necessary. The Lord so teaches, and that is enough; the Lord's promises are never broken.

Respecting Baptism, every sect is more or less in error. The Romish Church never neglects Baptism, but she goes entirely too far when she baptizes bells, and other than living human creatures. Every other sect in some way departs from the Scriptures on this subject. Nearly all of them regard Baptism simply as a sign, and not a means of regeneration. With many of the sects the *mode* of Baptism is everything; they say it is not true Baptism unless performed by immersion. These again

are divided among themselves, some claiming that the person must be plunged forward, while others stoutly insist that the candidate must needs be thrown backwards. With such people it is the water and not the Word of God that is the chief thing in Baptism. Among Protestant sects infant Baptism is greatly neglected, and many even denounce it as a sin. Truly, one departure from God's Word opens the way to a multitude of errors!

The Lutheran Church, in full accord with the Scriptures, teaches that Baptism is not a mere sign and empty ceremony, but "a washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus 3, 5; that it unites with Christ, and is unto the forgiveness of sins. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Gal. 3, 26. 27. "Repent, and be baptized

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2, 38. It therefore delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe. Col. 1, 12-14. 1 Pet. 3, 20. 21. As regards children, they are flesh "born of the flesh," and are to be baptized that they may "be born of water and of the Spirit," as the Lord requires. John 3, 5. God desires the salvation of children and has not overlooked them and their wants in the appointment of His means of grace. The written Word and the Lord's Supper are not intended for the little babes, but Baptism is the means through which the children can be reached, and it has been instituted chiefly for their benefit. The Scriptures plainly teach that children are to be baptized, and it is a grievous sin to deny them that right and blessing.

The busy spirit of sectarianism not only does violence to the Sacraments; it also beclouds and greatly obscures the very central doctrine of the Scriptures. Having the Bible, and rightly teaching its doctrines, are two entirely different things. The Romish Church has the Bible, but its central doctrine, viz., Justification alone by faith in Christ, she bitterly opposes. The Romish Church is noted for her doctrine of work-righteousness; her people are taught **that** their good works merit the forgiveness of sins. Hence also her many penances, fastings, etc., etc. Not Christ's merits, but human works, are the chief things in Romanism.

But, also among Protestant sects, the doctrine of Justification is badly mixed up with self-righteous ideas. The prevailing opinion among them seems to be about as follows: Believe as you

please, only *do* right and you *are* right. That really means salvation by works, and not alone through Christ. Hence the unionistic plea that "you can do good in all churches"; therefore it is not necessary to look after the kind of doctrine that is taught. Sectarians have an elastic "charity" that will cover every case except that of an uncompromising adherence to God's Word. Be good, do this, and omit that, and you are a Christian. To the unconverted it is often said: "Get religion; come to the altar, and wrestle, and pray until you are converted." With whip and spurs the poor sinner is urged along until he is supposed to "get through," and is "saved." Churches practicing such methods do not depend upon the preached Word as a power to gain souls; not the preaching, but their weak, human, "revival *exercises*" are means chiefly relied upon for suc-

cessful campaign against sin. Thus, Rome is not alone in her doctrine of work - righteousness and dependence upon human methods in spiritual things; she has a large following in the sectarian camp generally.

The Lord says: "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8, 31-32. The Lutheran Church continues in the Word, and tenaciously clings to the assurance that we are saved alone by grace through faith in Christ. This is the only doctrine that can give peace to the soul when it sees its true condition. The filthy rags of human righteousness can avail us nothing when we appear before the holy and omniscient God. Christ and His merits are the sinner's only comfort, therefore we sing:

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness:
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name,
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

What your soul needs is the pure doctrine of God’s Word, and this you will not find outside of the Lutheran Church. That other Christian churches still have truth enough to save souls, we do not deny. But it is far better to remain where the means of salvation are not encumbered by error. If you were making an ocean voyage you might get through on a very frail bark, but you certainly would be safer in a good, sound, and reliable vessel, than in one whose principal timbers are worm eaten and badly diseased. Always escape dangers by avoiding unnecessary exposure to them.

Be true to the Lutheran Church; she

has just what your soul needs. While she is free from the errors by which other churches are affected, they have no true doctrines that are not her's also. Be true to your spiritual mother! By deserting her you can gain positively nothing, while your loss would be beyond all computation. Also,

REMEMBER YOUR SOLEMN PROMISE.

Were you in earnest when you stood before the altar on Confirmation Day? God forbid that we should have reason to think otherwise of you! That was a solemn moment, and you should never forget it and the confession you made. You were previously instructed in the doctrines of God's Word as confessed by the Lutheran Church; you were taught what to believe and why. You would not have been confirmed had you not professed to believe the doctrines of the Scriptures, and expressed a desire to be

received into full communion in the Church. You appeared before the altar, and there openly confessed your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and solemnly promised "to remain faithful to the Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church until death." That promise was not made simply to the pastor and congregation; it was made unto the Lord, and witnessed by the angels of heaven.

By the grace of God, be faithful to your vow! It will cost you many a hard struggle, but the Lord will give you strength to overcome every temptation that may obstruct your path. In God's name, you have renounced the devil, and all his works and ways; let them never become your masters. Never abandon your Church to seek a spiritual home in a strange household of faith. A Lutheran can never join another church without denying the truth, and profess-

ing to believe doctrines which he knows are false. Nothing but evil can ever result from such hypocrisy and self-deception. Under no circumstances consent to leave the Lutheran Church. Remember your confirmation vow; remain faithful to your Church, and the Lord will be with you and bless you.

ATTEND YOUR CHURCH AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

It is a sad fact that a great many who claim to be Lutherans are never seen in the Lord's house. Such persons are Lutherans only in name, and even the name doesn't fit them. Willfully neglecting the means of grace is ruinous to the soul. Therefore the Apostle utters the admonition, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. 10. 25. It is very easy to get in the habit of being absent from divine services; the temptations are

strong, and the flesh is so very weak. The devil is exceedingly busy on the Lord's day, and is always prepared to furnish one with any number of excuses for staying away from the place where the Word is preached. That is Satan's business, and he was never known to neglect a single opportunity for doing evil.

Sunday has been set apart as a day of public worship, and the day should be devoted to our spiritual interests, and to the performance of our religious duties in general. It is written: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." This means that "We should fear and love God, that we may not despise preaching and His Word; but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it." He who neglects to hear the preaching of God's Word thereby despises the Word, and is guilty of a great sin against God, his neighbor, and his own soul. Carelessness on the part of any member is discouraging to

the pastor and congregation, and sets a bad example all around. Let no trivial excuse keep you from attending any of the services. If tempted to remain away, ask yourself the question: Can I answer to God for my absence from His house? If this question is earnestly considered, the Word of God and your conscience will direct you aright. Every service has its peculiar benefits, and every service you neglect, you rob your soul of some particular blessing. Attend church regularly, and with the desire of being edified, and not merely from habit, or to see and be seen. The church is the Lord's temple, the place where His honor dwelleth, and should always be entered with a feeling of reverence. We should go to the Lord's house to worship, and not to offer "the sacrifice of fools." Eccl. 5, 1. Be in your place early, that you may have the benefit of the entire service, and avoid annoying others by coming

in late. Take an active part in the service, join heartily in the singing, and pay strict attention to the reading of the Scriptures, and to the preaching of the Word. Those who are thus engaged will have no time to spend in watching others, and Satan will have less opportunity to take away the good seed that is being sown.

The Sunday-school has also a claim upon you. Do you attend Sunday-school? If not, why not? Do not foolishly conclude that, because you are now confirmed, you no longer need to go to Sunday-school. We are never too big, nor too old, for the study of God's Word. We never can become too familiar with the Scriptures, and our religious knowledge can always be increased. The fact that you have been confirmed is rather an additional reason why you should attend Sunday-school. This enables you to be all the more useful to

other members of the School. Do all you can to make your Sunday-school as great a success as possible.

NEVER NEGLECT THE HOLY COMMUNION.

We are sorry to say, there are many of our confirmed youth who appear at the Lord's table a few times, and then are never seen there again. It is with a sad and heavy heart that we pen these words, for they are the awful record of spiritual death! My dear young friends, take earnest heed unto yourselves, lest you too fall into careless ways, and finally be led to eternal ruin! Commune, regularly, and, if possible, several times during the year. The Apostle's words: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," teach us that we should frequently receive the Lord's Supper. As due preparation is always necessary, circumstances may arise under which it is advisable not to go to the

Sacrament. But, just in this very matter, the greatest care is needed, lest the devil and the flesh be permitted to forge an excuse for our staying away from the Lord's table. "I am not prepared" affords a convenient shelter for those who find their sins too sweet to be abandoned; but the way of impenitence soon blunts the conscience, and is the cradle of death in which many a soul is rocked to sleep.

Regard the communion season as a rich spiritual feast, and be prepared to enjoy it when it comes; it may be your last opportunity. Go to your pastor and announce yourself for communion; permit him to comfort, warn, or admonish you as circumstances may require; thankfully receive his friendly counsel, and, in the fear of God, try to profit by it. Never neglect the Holy Communion, lest such neglect be your start upon the downward road to destruction.

SUPPORT YOUR CHURCH.

Remember, you not only need the Church, but that the Church also needs you. God could erect churches, and send angels to occupy the pulpit, and minister at the altar, but that is not His plan. In carrying on the work of the Church, God requires men to perform the necessary labor, and He adds His blessing. Every Christian has been assigned duties according to his gifts, and every gift is to be employed in the Master's service. The pastor gives his time and strength to the duties of his office, and "the laborer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10, 7. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel shall live by the Gospel." 1 Cor. 9, 14. That is, they are to do the work of their calling, and the people for whom they labor are to furnish the necessary support. Therefore every communicant

member of the congregation should do his or her part toward the pastor's salary, and thus aid in having the Gospel preached. Gal. 6, 7.

But the duties of the Christian are not limited to the home congregation. The Lord's command is, "Preach the Gospel to every creature;" missionaries must be sent out to break the bread of life unto others, and chapels are to be built, etc. And that we may have missionaries and pastors, schools must be provided for the education of those who are to be pastors and teachers in the Church. The orphans, widows, and the deserving poor within the church, are to be properly cared for. The Lord lays all these duties upon us that our hearts may be kept open, and that we may in these ways serve and honor Him. For, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my breth-

ren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25, 40.

Do you give liberally to the Church? Perhaps you are in the habit of spending everything for your own selfish purposes, and therefore have nothing left for an offering unto the Lord. The Savior says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9, 23. Self-denial for the Lord's sake, is a real virtue. Can you not practice a little self-denial in behalf of the Lord's cause? The price of a new hat might be saved by wearing the old one a little longer, and sensible people would think none the less of you on that account. A little economy and self-denial would enable the boys and young men to do much more for the Church. Dollars for luxuries, and pennies for Christ, is too often the rule. The Church always needs much more money than she ever gets, and there is room for

a greater degree of open-handed benevolence upon the part of all true Christians. Freely exercise yourselves in deeds of Christian charity, and the Lord will reward you an hundred-fold. "God loveth a cheerful giver," and "the liberal soul shall be made fat." Be an ardent supporter of your Church; give her a liberal share of your time and money, according to your opportunity and ability; and, in addition to every other gift, remember your Church in earnest and daily prayer.

III. BE TRUE TO YOUR LORD.

Christians are to be *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Being a Christian does not consist merely in an outward observance of the religious duties of a church member, necessary as this is. The external observance of Christian duties must flow from the soul: in this manner the soul gives utterance to that which is

within. It is particularly of the Christian's inner and more personal life that we now wish to speak. No doubt there are many whose Christianity is simply a matter of form; like the Pharisees of old, they are righteous only in appearance. Then there are also "Sunday Christians"—persons whose religion is like their Sunday clothes, something that is worn only on certain occasions. Sad to say, there are people who want the congregation to count them as good members of the Church, but such is their daily life that no one would suppose that they considered themselves Christians.

The Savior says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7, 21. The will of God is revealed unto us by the Word. We must not only have a knowledge of God's Word, but also receive it as such, and

earnestly confide in it as the power of God unto the salvation of our own soul. Many know the truth and accept it as a matter of fact, but never suffer it to enter their hearts and lives. Merely to know of Christ, and to believe that He is God's Son, will avail us nothing; "the devils also believe, and tremble." James 2, 19. We must know and accept Christ as *our* Savior, and trust in Him as the certain and only refuge for souls. That we may have and retain true faith in Christ, it is necessary for us to avoid every form of false doctrine and evil practice, and make diligent use of the pure Word and Sacraments. These are the means employed by God to fill our hearts with true spiritual life. Those who are fully awakened to the great truth that we are saved alone by grace through faith will manifest the faith that is in them; a godly walk or conversation must follow as the result of true faith in the heart. In the fear and

love of God, true and earnest Christians will seek to obey their Savior's command: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5, 16. Although the Christian is a new creature in Christ Jesus he is not free from sin; the old Adam clings to the child of God as long as he is in the flesh. The Christian's life is a constant warfare, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Gal. 5, 17. But the child of God must remember his Baptismal covenant, and diligently strive to keep the flesh in subjection, as the Apostle teaches: "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death; that like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6. You have also learned from your Catechism, "that the old Adam

in us, by daily contrition and repentance, should be drowned and die, with all sins and evil lusts; and that a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live in righteousness and purity before God forever." By way of assistance, young friends, permit me to call your attention to a few points worthy of careful consideration by those who would lead pious and happy lives.

"KEEP THYSELF PURE." I TIM. 5, 22.

These words of St. Paul should be deeply impressed upon the mind and heart of every servant of the Lord. Especially to the young we would say: "*Keep thyself pure.*" Satan is well aware that early training accomplishes much; therefore he begins to impart his evil lessons at as early an age as possible, and always pursues a course that is most in harmony with depraved human nature. The young are easily entrapped

in the meshes of sinful lust, and Satan promptly takes advantage of every opportunity afforded him by the natural weakness of those whom he seeks to destroy. He reaps a fearful harvest from the ranks of the young of both sexes. The vicious habits acquired in the days of youth, and the secret and manifest sins against the sixth commandment, are among Satan's choicest methods of destruction. The evils flowing from these vices are often visited upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation. Exod. 20, 4. The sixth commandment is not only directed against the act of adultery, but also against every kindred vice and shame. The Lord would have us shun everything that is unchaste, and thereby avoid the whole train of evils that follow in the wake of indecency. All persons, and especially the young, should pay earnest heed to the lessons here cited from the Holy Scrip-

tures: "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." 1 Tim. 2, 9. "Flee fornication." 1 Cor. 6, 18. "Flee also youthful lusts." 2 Tim. 2, 22. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Prov. 1, 10. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," and, in word and deed, carefully guard against that which may give rise to evil thoughts in the minds of your companions. Remember that God is a silent witness of everything that occurs, and from Him nothing can be concealed.

Do not conclude that because you avoid the coarser evils, and never engage in things that are generally denounced as wrong, that you are therefore keeping yourself pure. The world is corrupt, it lieth in wickedness and is not competent to decide as to what is pure and harmless. The world is not ruled by the spirit

of Christ, and what it pronounces good is often quite the opposite. That which "fashionable society" considers most elevating and attractive, is frequently very injurious in its tendencies. The theater and the dance head the list of "innocent amusements" eagerly courted and patronized by worldly-minded people. But the average stage performance tends to foster a craving for that which is impure and sensational. Nonsense and deviltry are the principal features of nearly every play. The deeper the villainy, and the greater the scandal that is portrayed, the more interesting and attractive to the audience. People are completely carried away by such things and the regular theater goer squanders the money needed for better purposes, and has but little taste for anything of a solid and profitable nature. What cheap novels and trashy literature are at home, the theater is to those who spend their evenings

there. They are similar in their effects, and both should be avoided by all who desire to be earnest followers of Jesus.

The modern dance is entirely of the world and the flesh. The fashionable ball, with its immodesty in dress and almost indecent exposures, is simply a school of jealousy, vanity and lust. In the dance there is a promiscuous mingling of the sexes, the married and the single, and it permits and requires liberties and familiarities which, if taken under other circumstances, would result in divorce suits and bloody tragedies. Who can doubt or deny this? These facts are sufficient to brand the dance-house as a place to be shunned by every Christian. Sudden death is of rather frequent occurrence, and where is the Christian that would not consider it a disgrace to die in a ball room? The following rule can be applied with profit: Never enter a place where your death would be a dis-

grace to your memory; and never engage in anything in which you cannot consistently ask God's blessing to rest upon you. Would you dress for a ball and, before starting, ask God to be with you during the evening? Would you deem it proper to open a dance with prayer? Would you glorify your Maker by attending a ball? Your answer is, "No!" And yet the Scriptures say: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10, 31.

Do not run into excesses and temptations, and then apologize for your sins by saying: "I am young now, but will settle down when I am older." Many do thus excuse the sins and follies of youth, and continue to indulge in sin until their horrible doom is forever sealed. It is written: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," and it certainly is tempting God when one will-

fully continues in sin so long as he sees himself threatened by no immediate danger. It is wickedly trifling with God's justice and mercy when one proposes to devote the vigor of youth and manhood to the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and finally to turn to the Lord just in time to escape the pangs of hell. An awful risk is run by those who presume that, at the end of a sinful life, God will favor them with an opportunity to make their peace with Him whom they have so long willingly insulted.

My young friends, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Eccl. 12. 1. Consecrate yourselves, soul and body, to the service of the living God. Be true to your Savior, and do not, by a careless and sinful life, crucify your Lord

anew, and open afresh His bleeding wounds.

AVOID PROFANITY.

We deem it necessary to mention this evil and earnestly warn against it, because it is so shamefully prevalent. Upon our streets and highways, and in every public place we are forced to hear men and boys giving utterance to the vilest oaths and curses. It is terrible to think that any miserable lump of clay would dare to mock the Almighty by wickedly using His sacred name! That even Christians may be overtaken by this shocking sin is evident from the warnings given by the Scriptures. St. James writes: "With the tongue bless we God, even the Father: and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." Many other passages of God's

Words are also aimed at this sin. The young are often of the opinion that it is very manly to curse and swear. But how can it be manly to offer an insult to the Most High? Profanity is a low, ungentlemanly, and wicked habit. It is a grievous sin against God, and an offense to decent society. What excuse can possibly be offered for profanity? None whatever. It is always harmful, weakens language, and is as silly as it is vile. Avoid profanity; it grieves your Lord and Savior, and pleases the devil who is seeking to destroy you. Never permit wicked oaths and curses to escape your lips; profanity is always a mark of coarseness and depravity. Also remember the words of Holy Writ: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." Exod. 20, 7.

BEWARE OF GAMBLING AND DRINKING.

These are vices by which thousands are ruined, body and soul. Of course, not all games are to be condemned; there are many that may be indulged in without harm, that are even very useful means of recreation. Cards and billiards are, of themselves, no more sinful than any other game, but they are so extensively used in gambling that it is better and safer not to know anything about either of them. Cards and billiards are the gambler's favorite methods of cheating and robbing his fellow-man. There appears to be something very fascinating about these games. At first they are indulged in merely for amusement, but the very fact that they are so generally used as "gambling tools" soon suggests the fashionable idea of playing for a stake. The beginner is led to play for small things; a game decides who is to pay

for the use of the tables, or for the cigars, or for the beer. It is always sinful to play even for the smallest article; it is gambling, no matter whether the amount represented is a penny or a dollar. The sinful practice once begun is hard to shake off, and usually leads to a very serious end. Time, and money, and character are frittered away at the gaming table, and the once respected and honorable young man becomes a miserable scoundrel hardened in rascality and theft.

Gambling naturally leads to the sin of drunkenness, and other vices. It is so convenient to play for the "drinks." Gambling, drunkenness, lewdness, are closely related to each other; the dram-shop is generally furnished with gaming tables, and thus Satan combines his means of swift destruction. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not

wise." Prov. 20, 1 ; also Prov. 23, 26-35. Beware of gambling and drinking, and do not grieve your Savior by falling into these terrible sins. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." I Cor. 6, 9. 10.

CONFESS YOUR LORD AND DENY HIM NOT.

Never be ashamed to confess your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Your Lord says: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Mark 8, 38. The blessed Jesus was not ashamed to own His great love for us, and even gave Himself upon the cross

to save a race of sinful mortals. For *you* He shed His precious blood, and bowed that sacred head in the agonies of a bitter death! Oh, that you may always be able to sing with the Church:

“Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name.”

Willingly own your Savior; confess your Lord, and deny Him not. Our Savior declares: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 10, 32. 33. A denial of Christ does not only consist in a malicious rejection of Him, but also in remaining silent concerning Him and His truth. One who refuses to own and confess Christ is really guilty of denying Him. “He that is

not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad," saith the Lord. Matt. 12, 30. Dear friends, you have put on Christ in holy Baptism, and when you stood at the altar on confirmation day you renewed your baptismal pledge, and solemnly promised that you would be faithful to your Lord until death. That meant that you would remain a faithful witness for Jesus as long as you have breath. If you will be true to your Lord you must be ready and willing to confess Him under all circumstances.

Stand up for Christ and His kingdom; in the spirit of Jesus, admonish and rebuke those who, in your presence, scoff at the Savior and His Church; prove yourself a true soldier of the cross. Avoid the society of infidels and ungodly men where there is no longer any hope of gaining them for the truth. Shun the Christless lodges; have nothing to do

with the various secret orders of the land, for, in their very nature, they are opposed to Christ and His Church, and are ruinous to the soul. Unbelief causes men to trust in "the arm of flesh" rather than in the Lord; hence the many organizations resorted to for worldly gain, and upon which men depend for help in the time of need. But God's promise is: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Ps. 37, 3.

Satan has never ceased saying: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me," and the great love of earthly gain leads many into the service of the devil. Contend against every inclination to avarice, and never become a party in any ungodly schemes, neither for your own advantage nor for that of others. Confess your Lord by a strict adherence to the principles of true Christianity. Deal honestly with all

men, and be ready to resign the most lucrative position, rather than retain it by consenting to practice fraud and deception. Never be hired to live in sin, and accept no situation that will prevent you from attending your Church. Wherever you go, take the religion of Christ with you. It has cost the Savior's blood to redeem you, and required the blood of martyrs to preserve the true faith on earth, and no mess of pottage should ever induce you to deny your faith and disown your Lord. Ever be a true confessor of Jesus and His peace will abide with you.

BE PRAYERFUL.

Many are the trials and afflictions experienced during life; but, "My grace is sufficient for thee," saith the Lord. The grace and strength necessary to carry us through every trial will always be supplied if we ask God for it. "Ye have not, because ye ask not." James 4, 2.

This explains why many remain so poor in spiritual gifts. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Ps. 50, 15. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." John 16, 23. The command of God, and the rich promises He has given concerning prayer, should lead every Christian to pray diligently. Not a day should pass without earnest prayer. When at divine service unite in the prayers of the Church, pray at home with the family, and also in private. When you retire, review the transactions of the day, ask God to forgive your sins, and commend yourself to His paternal care; and when you awake from the slumbers of the night, raise your heart to God in humble supplication and praise. When you establish a home of your own, erect your family altar and never let it be neglected.

Entreat the Savior to dwell with you; permit His spirit to reign in your home, and it will be cheered by the sunshine of Heaven, and always be decked with the sweet garlands of peace.

READ YOUR BIBLE.

The Holy Scriptures are God's Word. The Bible is the Heavenly Fountain from which flow the precious waters of eternal Life. It is God's storehouse of spiritual supplies. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3, 16. 17. Read your Bible every day, and earnestly meditate upon its precepts. "Search the Scriptures," that is, diligently study them, and learn all you can from them. Fill your mind with the rich promises of God's

Word, and they will prove a mighty staff upon which to lean in the hour of need. Make your Bible and Catechism your companions through life. Doctrinal works, books of devotion, and your Church paper, will aid you in understanding the Scriptures and assist you in applying them to the special wants of your soul. Read your Bible regularly, thoughtfully and prayerfully, and the Spirit of God will enrich you beyond measure. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." Luke 11, 28.

CONCLUSION.

A few words more, dear friends, and I have done. You have "professed a good profession before many witnesses," therefore we beseech you: "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art so called." 1 Tim. 6, 12. Thousands vow faithfulness unto the Lord, but soon grow weary in well-

doing and turn away. Permit me to ask you in the language of the Savior, "Will ye also go away?" God grant that, from sincere hearts, your reply may be in the words of the disciples of old: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." John 6, 67. In Christ, and in Him alone, is our peace. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," saith the Redeemer. Do not forsake Christ and lose your soul! In God's name, we beseech you, be true to your Lord! The struggle can not be long; only remain the true followers of Jesus and He will lead you to eternal victory. May the following lines always be an apt expression of your soul's convictions and sincere desires:

"Ever true this word remains:

He who Christ to own refuses,
While he earthly comfort gains,
Everlasting comfort loses;

For the Savior will not own
Him before the Father's throne.

To the banner of the cross
I fidelity have plighted,
It would be my endless loss
If this solemn vow were slighted;
Therefore Jesus, none but He,
Shall my constant watchword be.

Let me, till my latest breath,
Christ confess with constant meekness;
Let me faithful be till death,
Strong in Him 'mid all my weakness;
Let me live in Him, and die
Heir of mansions in the sky."

Yes, by the grace of God, be true! Be true to your parents, to your Church, and to your Lord! Remember the promise you have made unto God, and also hold fast to that promise which God makes unto you: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of Life."
Rev. 2, 10.

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